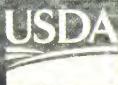


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SOUTH FORK *Wildlife Area*

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1998



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Prepared by
Forest
Service

Sequoia
National
Forest



South Fork Kern River

The South Fork Wildlife Area is ...part of the Great Valley Riparian Forest Ecosystem.

The riverside forest, otherwise known as riparian, consists primarily of mixed willow species and Fremont's cottonwood trees. Intermixed with these trees are dense stands of mule fat, stinging nettle, and rabbit brush. Cattails, tules, and wild celery abound in the wet area.

...home to a multitude of birds and animals.

Birds of the South Fork Valley are found in great abundance and diversity. Over 315 bird species have been observed utilizing the South Fork Valley including the state endangered yellow-billed cuckoo, the federally endangered southwestern willow flycatcher, the summer tanager, blue grosbeak, yellow warbler, tri-colored blackbird, and yellow-breasted chat.

Many of the birds breeding here are Neotropical migrants. These species will nest and forage in the riparian forest during the summer and then fly to South and Central America for the winter.

Birds of prey that may be seen soaring over the

Yellow-billed Cuckoo



South Fork Valley include the golden eagle, bald eagle and the osprey. Up to eight species of owls are known to use the area, including the burrowing, long-eared and barn owls.

Many birders delight in the eight species of hummingbirds that have been recorded utilizing the valley. The area is also home to a variety of waterbirds, such as the double-crested cormorant, Clark's grebe, and the northern pintail. Other bird species of special interest are the American white pelican, roadrunner, turkey vulture, great blue heron, and the belted kingfisher.

Mammals found here include mule deer, beaver, coyotes, gray fox, bobcats, raccoons, and occasionally black bear and mountain lion. A sizeable population of southwestern pond turtles live in the river backwaters and ponds of the wildlife area.

Raccoon





Summer Tanager

Migration Map For Neotropical Bird Species



Key for Map:

193 Total breeding species in the South Fork Wildlife Area

99 Species reside here all year

94 Species migrate after breeding season

20 Species short distance migrators

34 Species migrate to Mexico

16 Species migrate to north Central America

10 Species migrate to south Central America

8 Species migrate to north South America

6 Species migrate to south South America

...a unique recreation opportunity.

In addition to its wildlife values, the South Fork Wildlife Area provides unique recreational opportunities to the visitor. Fishing, hunting, canoeing, kayaking, and hiking are activities that attract recreation enthusiasts to Lake Isabella and the South Fork Wildlife Area. Birdwatchers, botanists, and teachers come to study and teach about the ecological values of the riparian forest. Special boating and camping restrictions are in effect in the South Fork Wildlife Area to protect the wildlife values. For details regarding these restrictions, please check with the local Forest Service Ranger Station prior to visiting the Wildlife Area.

Canoeing in the South Fork



**...a place to enjoy,
but please join us in conserving
this special place.**

The South Fork Kern River supports a portion of the most extensive riparian* forest remaining in California. The South Fork Wildlife Area, located at the southeastern end of the Kern River Valley, is comprised of a dense growth of riparian trees and shrubs. The area's rich alluvial soils and high water table nourishes a large portion of what remains of California's Great Valley Riparian Forest. Less than two percent of the state's original riparian forests survive today. The South Fork Wildlife Area is approximately 1200 acres and is managed by the Sequoia National Forest.

The South Fork Wildlife Area is a part of one of the few ecosystems in North America that is at a convergence of five major bioregions, or ecologically distinct areas. Bioregions converging in this area are the Great Basin, Mojave Desert, Sierran Forest, Coastal Chaparral, and the California Grasslands/Great Valley Riparian Forest.

* The term *riparian* refers to the habitats located on the bank of a river, creek, or lake.

Cooperative Management

The U. S. Forest Service manages and studies the South Fork Wildlife Area utilizing partnership agreements and cooperative relationships with Audubon-California, California Department of Fish and Game, dedicated independent wildlife biologists and researchers, South Fork Resource Conservation District, and private landowners.

Credits

Photographs

Cover

South Fork Kern River – Teresa Ritter
Lesser Goldfinch – Steve Laymon
Red-winged Blackbird – Steve Laymon
Western Kingbird – Steve Laymon

Inside

South Fork Kern River – Teresa Ritter
Yellow-billed Cuckoo – Ian Tait
Raccoon – Steve Laymon
Summer Tanager – T. and L. Bulmer
Canoeing the South Fork – Sharon Leger

Migration Map

Information Provided by

Steve Laymon (1998)
American Ornithologists Union (1957)

Migration Map Graphics

Shari Darke, Central Printing & Graphics



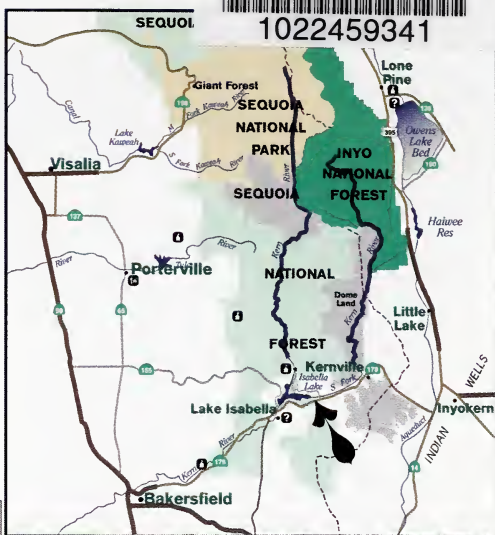
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